DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 394 IR 057 544

AUTHOR	Kekana, Kgaladi E.
TITLE	Selection of Library Materials in the University of the North Library.
PUB DATE	1999-05-00
NOTE	41p.; Master's Research Paper, Kent State University.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses (040)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Libraries; Content Analysis; *Employee Responsibility; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Librarians; *Library Collection Development; *Library Material Selection; Literature Reviews; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS	*University of the North (South Africa)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate who should be responsible in the selection of library materials, and to compare the primary responsibility by country and type of library. A content analysis was used to examine 70 articles relating to selection responsibility. The articles cover the period 1950 to 1998, with a wide range of categories used to analyze the selection information. The result is a characterization of the factors that make up the discussion. Factors were grouped in six categories--primary responsibility, type of library, type of academic library, organization of library, country, and publication date. These are the key issues in the selection of library materials. It was found that 38 (54.3%) of the articles mentioned librarians as being primarily responsible for selecting library materials. The chi square analysis revealed a relationship of primary responsibility by country. Appendices include content analysis coding categories, a sample coding sheet, content analysis data, and a list of articles analyzed. Recommendations are offered for the University of the North Library (South Africa). (Contains 14 references.) (Author/MES)

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SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH LIBRARY

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A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library
and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

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May, 1999

IR057544

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate who should be responsible in the selection of library materials, and to compare the primary responsibility by countries and type of libraries. A content analysis was used to examine 70 articles relating to selection responsibility. The articles covered the period 1950 to 1998, with a wide range of categories used to analyze the selection information. The result is a characterization of the factors that make up the discussion. Factors were grouped in six categories: primary responsibility, types of libraries, types of academic libraries, organization of library, country and publication date.

The category, primary responsibility, is the most frequently addressed in the literature, followed not too distantly by types of libraries, types of academic libraries, organization of library, country and publication date. These are the major key issues in the selection of library materials.

It was found that 38 (54.3%) of the articles mentioned librarians as being primarily responsible for selecting library materials. The chi square analysis revealed a relationship of primary responsibility by country.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer special thanks to Dr. Lois Buttlar for her work in helping creating and maintaining the EDD program and generating statistical reports, and also explaining how the program works. North Lilly and members of the Kent State University Library's Interlibrary Loan department for offering invaluable assistance and timeless support. A grateful thanks to Dr. Buttlar for sacrificing all her time in supervising and leading me during the whole process.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

University of the North is one of the academic institutions in South Africa. It is one of the former five historically black universities. It has an academic library attached to it, that is University of the North (UNIN) Library. UNIN Library was established in 1960 with five staff members.

University of the North Library started as a one-room operation and expanded its facilities to serve approximately 14,500 students. The library is centralized and is under the control of the library director. It has a total collection of 746,243 books and 2,285 periodicals. It is regarded as being a relatively small library taking into consideration the present collection and the large student population.

The library employs fifty-seven staff members, twenty-eight professionals and twenty-nine non-professionals. Out of the twenty-eight professionals, eleven are subject librarians who are or are supposed to be responsible for the development of the collection. UNIN Library provides information services to undergraduates and graduate students, researchers, academic and administrative staff.

Background to the Problem

The library plays a vital role in an academic institution. This has been recognized widely, and Allan M. Cartter, for example, stated in his report to the American Council of Education that " the library is the heart of the university; no other single non-human factor is as closely related to the quality of graduate

education"(Cartter 1966, 114). Just as the library is the heart of the university, its collection is the nucleus of the library. Without a collection, there is no library. The collection is therefore of vital importance to the university. It exists to help in furthering the goals and objectives of the university. To continue to be of value, the library collection has to be continuously developed and maintained. If this is not done, the collection will deteriorate and lose importance. Collections are like learning, which according to a Chinese saying, " is like sailing against the tide: if you don't advance, you retreat."

The collection at the UNIN Library is in decline, that is, the collection is not well balanced and most of the materials are outdated. The reason may be because of the controversial issues between the librarians and the faculty members on who should be responsible for selecting or developing the library collection. Both parties claim to be responsible. This is a serious problem the library is facing because there is no continuous development and maintenance of the collection. The problem is not resolved and no one is attempting to resolve it.

Historically, most academic libraries (universities in particular) have depended on faculties for selection of library collection. Faculty representatives, serving as departmental liaison personnel with the library, approve the necessary selection for a particular academic department or research institute. However, there is an inadequate library collection and some faculty members are reluctant to take part in selection while others select titles relevant to their own research or studies. Because of this, most academic libraries have in recent years felt the

need to supplement the endeavors of faculty members through the use of subject specialists and subject librarians. That is where the controversial issues started at University of the North Library.

Purpose of the study

The broader purpose of the study is to explore the relevant literature related to the topic and find out what it says in terms of whether the faculty members, the librarians or both parties are responsible for developing the library collection. Finally, the study will provide recommendations that can be used by University of the North librarians to resolve the existing problem and improve their library collection.

Definition of Terms

Faculty members - for the purpose of this study, faculty members means the teaching staff or academic staff. These words will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

University of the North Library- it is an academic library attached to the University of the North, commonly known as Turfloop situated in the Northern Province of South Africa.

Historically Black Universities- these are the universities that during the apartheid period were for Blacks only.

Librarians- these will in this study refer to the subject librarians.

Selection- it is a process of selecting individual items for the library collection.

Materials- it refers to the specific forms of media, it may include books

(hardbound and paperbound), maps, magazines and journals, sound tapes, slides, posters, videotapes, and art productions or original art works.

Limitations

This study is limited to the University of the North Academic Library only, and the recommendations or findings will not generalize the other academic libraries in South Africa. Literature searches will be primarily from Library Literature. Other searches might be from ERIC, but this will be very limited.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Although there is some divergence of opinion and practice with regard to the responsibility for selection, academic library collections have, historically, been selected by the faculty members of the institution that the library serves. Recently, however, much of the responsibility for selection of library materials has shifted to the librarians who are eager to retain and amplify their role in this area. Faculty members' sole responsibility in selection was being questioned by some authors who found it difficult to see them handling such a load in addition to their academic work. In 1969, Schad and Adams voiced a disenchanted opinion about faculty members' selection and criticism has been steadily growing. On the other hand, many authors make arguments in favor of selection by faculty members.

Danton (1963) has written a very authoritative book on selection policies at both the German and the American university libraries. In describing the American approach, he found that the policy at that time was based upon the premise that books for the library should be selected primarily by faculty members, since they know best or are acquainted with the subject fields and their literature together with the needs of the students and faculty (Danton 1963).

On the German approach, he found that the administration and the legal responsibility of the book selection rest solely in the hands of the librarians, who have absolute control of the book budget (Danton 1963).

On the surface, each approach appears to be logically defensible. In

practice and, to a degree, in theory, both systems may be shown to have serious weaknesses that have worked to the disadvantage of the library patrons.

In their discussion of collection selection, Schad and Adams (1969) outline the desirable qualities of someone who should be in charge of selection. They suggest that librarians are solely responsible. They found that the faculty members have the tendency to select books which they themselves use in preparation for their lectures, or which will be assigned to students. Both of these are other weaknesses and will result in an unbalanced collection. They are totally against the view that faculty members should bear the sole responsibility in selection (Schad and Adams 1969). Evans (1970) did a survey as to whether the librarians or faculty members should be responsible for selection. He wrote that faculty members should not be given the responsibility of selecting library materials. He collected data from samples taken at several institutions. He used these statistics and found that materials selected by librarians circulate more frequently than those selected by faculty members, even after the latter had scrutinized them prior to ordering (Evans 1970). Jenkins (1996) conducted survey research in a small college library to find out who should take over the selection process. He found that the faculty members rank recommending materials for library purchase last among all their duties. He wrote that librarians should take over the selection process (Jenkins 1996).

The rationale for entrusting the faculty with book selection is self evident to many authors, such as Sellen (1985), Walden (1990) and others. These authors consider selection by faculty members as desirable, although they recognize it

has its own pitfalls. Walden (1990) continues a discussion about why faculty members should be responsible for collection selection. She found that some faculty members are more active in providing librarians with suggestions and requests for acquisitions than other faculty members, who, due to their routine duties, have little time for even the ardent book people to become heavily involved in building library collections. She suggests that faculty members should carry the whole responsibility (Walden 1990). Sellen (1985) did a comparative study on the frequency of book circulation selected by both faculty members and librarians. She found that books selected by faculty members were circulated more frequently than those selected by librarians. She suggests that selection by faculty members will result in a balanced and well-rounded collection (Sellen 1985). Arnold (1993) analyzed the participation of faculty members in book selection and argues that faculty members know their respective fields, their own library needs and those of their students better than any librarian can, and, therefore, can judge the value of a book better (Arnold 1993). She further pointed out the issue of approval plans. On this issue, she wrote that approval notification slips promote faculty participation in book selection. In the studies conducted by all these authors in favor of faculty responsibilities, the faculty members participated more greatly in college and smaller university libraries than in large academic libraries.

When considering the two viewpoints, the question must evolve: Who should be solely responsible? Strauch (1990) wrote and describes both sides of the debate in detail. She looked into two issues, that is, participation in the

selection process versus control of library budget and analyzed them. She found that both the librarians and the faculty members should be responsible for selecting and maintaining a well balanced collection. She sees allocation of funds not as a threat to the power base of librarians' control, but rather as a way for librarians and faculty to work together to achieve the goal of a good library collection. She regards this relationship in selection not as "a dichotomy but as a partnership" (Strauch 1990, 39). Strauch (1990) also wrote that the fact that the library controls the materials budget does not mean that faculty members cannot participate in how funds are spent. Thus, she stresses the fact that the two should work together to enhance a balanced collection (Strauch 1990). The cooperative selection effort among faculty members and librarians in an academic library was investigated (Huguelet 1985). Huguelet discovered that participation of the two groups in title selection would make the collection grow according to the curriculum needs of the community for which the library operates. Connell (1991) studied the relationship between both faculty members and librarians in selecting library materials. She found that both faculty members and librarians should share the responsibility of selecting materials for the library (Connell 1991).

Johnson (1993) did a brief survey on collection selection. He found that faculty members strongly influence academic libraries' collections and librarians have influence in the public libraries' collections. He suggests that the two groups should work jointly to enhance the collection (Johnson 1993). Hardesty (1986) studied book selection for the undergraduate collection and analyzed both faculty

members' and librarians' attitudes. He concluded that librarians, students, academic administrators, and faculty members should all participate and share responsibilities in the selection of library materials (Hardesty 1986).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study used the method of content analysis to determine what the literature says about the selection of library materials. Content analysis is a widely used research method for making deductions from printed materials, and it utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from the text (Krippendorff 1980). Also, the content of each article related to the selection of library materials was analyzed to determine how selection was done in the past and how it is currently done in other libraries.

A total of seventy periodical articles were collected and used to gather data in this study. The selected periodical articles are not meant to be authoritative, but are intended as representative samples of the literature by which the prevailing problems at the University of the North Library might be resolved. A coding sheet was used for each theme to record the data. Opinion expressed on each theme were counted and recorded.

After the literature was examined and the coding sheets filled out, the data was formatted and analyzed using the EDD statistical packages. The coding was done through the use of a computer-based equivalent, which helped in manipulating the data. A cross-tabulation statistic, wherein the computer partitions the data into discrete categories, was employed.

The percentage frequency of each recorded data was determined. Table representations of the frequency distributions were created. Then each theme was critically analyzed on the basis of the information from the coding sheet.

After all this was done, some conclusions were drawn, and recommendations were made based on the information collected.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to determine who should have authority in selecting library materials, 70 articles were studied and coded to be able to analyze the data. The articles included were published between 1955 and 1996. Each article was coded based on the following categories: primary responsibility, types of libraries, types of academic libraries, organization of libraries, country, and publication date. Each category was separately analyzed.

Types of Libraries

Libraries need to have well balanced and adequate library materials so the users can get satisfactory services. This applies to any type of library whether academic or public. According to the articles examined, more than half of them indicated that selection responsibility is more of a controversial issue in academic libraries than in public libraries. Academic libraries were cited 64 times (91.4%). The majority of the articles did not state selection as done in public libraries. The reasons behind might be that public libraries are not attached to any academic institution and are free from faculty members. As a result, librarians are the only ones responsible. Public libraries were therefore mentioned 6 times, in 8.6% of the total articles.

Types of Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are subdivided into types as indicated in table 1 below. From the same table, it is clear that of more literature related to selection refers to the university libraries more than any other type of academic libraries. Universities are mentioned 35 times representing 55.6% of the total articles taken into account. However, all types combined appeared in 13 or 20.6% of the articles. Community Colleges and Small Liberal Arts Colleges are almost on the verge, cited 8 (12.7%) and 7 (11.1%) respectively. It is also important to mention that the total frequency of this category did not add up to seventy because some articles mentioned public libraries, which are not subdivided into types of libraries.

Table 1.

Distribution of Academic Libraries by Type

Type of Library	f	%
Community Colleges	8	12.7
Small Liberal Arts Colleges	7	11.1
Universities	35	55.6
All Types Combined	13	20.6
Total	63	100.0

Primary Responsibility

This category is divided into three subgroups to best assess who should have authority over selecting library materials. They are librarians, faculty members, and both. Unfortunately from the articles examined, faculty members are the least to be given the opportunity. Table 2 below shows that out of seventy articles, 38 (54.3%) mentioned librarians as being the sole responsibility in selecting library materials. Faculty members are mentioned only 9 times representing 12.8%, while both, meaning the faculty members and the librarians is 23 (32.9%). It is determined that the primary responsibility for selection is vested on the librarians. Selection done by librarians seems to be gaining popularity internationally.

Table 2.

Distribution of Primary Responsibility by Both, Faculty Members, and Librarians.

Primary Responsibility	f	%
Both	23	32.9
Faculty Members	9	12.8
Librarians	38	54.3
Total	70	100.0

Organization of Libraries

Organization of libraries is classified as centralized, decentralized, and not designated. Table 3 below reveals that the organization of libraries is not an

important factor in determining who should be responsible in selecting library materials. Not designated appeared 48 times (68.6%), meaning that there was nothing said about whether a library was centralized or decentralized. Of all the articles looked at, 9 (12.8%) mentioned centralized and 13 (18.6%) decentralized.

Table 3.

Distribution of Library Organization

Library Organization	f	%
Centralized	9	12.8
Decentralized	13	18.6
Not Designated	48	68.6
Total	70	100.0

Country

Of the seventy articles analyzed, the most frequently mentioned country is the United States with 55 (78.6%) of the articles. Although the United States is the prevalent country, the other countries even if they have lesser frequencies are also concerned with who should be responsible for selection. Africa appeared 4 times (5.7%), Europe 7 (10.0%), South America once (1.4%), while others 3 (4.3%). "Others" included countries which are not specifically identified such as Asia, Canada, etc. (See table 4 below).

Table 4.

Distribution of Countries

Country	f	%
Africa	4	5.7
Europe	7	10.0
Others	3	4.3
South America	1	1.4
United States	55	78.6
Total	70	100.0

Publication Date

As illustrated in table 5 below, of the articles examined, it is clear that more research in this study was conducted in the 1980s as compared to other years. However, it must be noted that the literature of the 1990s was only analyzed up to 1996, and if the analysis was conducted at the very end of the 1990s their figures (1980s and 1990s) would probably be more equal, indicating that selection was also an equally important topic in 1990s. The 1980s publications appear 25 times denoting 35.7% of the total articles considered. This is followed by the1990s publications with 21 (30.0%). The years in which the least research was conducted was in the 1970s occurring 9 (12.9%) times. From the literature surveyed, it is shown that the problem of selecting library materials

has been a concern as far back as the 1950s. At least 15 articles (21.4%) were published during the1950s and the 1960s.

Table 5

Distribution of Publication by Date

Publication Date	f	%
1950-1969	15	21.4
1970-1979	9	12.9
1980-1989	25	35.7
1990-1998	21	30.0
Total	70	100.0

Relationship of primary responsibility by country and library type

A chi-square analysis of the relationship between primary responsibility for selection and country indicated that these two variables are related and not independent of each other. The chi-square value = 15.930, degrees of freedom = 8, sample size = 70, and probability = 0.043 (see table 6). On the other side, the chi-square analysis of the relationship between primary responsibility and library type indicated each being independent of one another. The chi-square value = 5.526, the degrees of freedom = 2, sample size = 70, and probability = 0.063.

Table 6

Primary Responsibility by Country

	COUNTRY					
Frequency Percent Row Pct Col Pct	Africa	Europe	Others	South America	United States	TOTAL
Both Faculty Members and Librarians	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	1 1.43 4.35 33.33	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	22 31.43 95.65 40.00	23 32.86
Faculty Members	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	2 2.86 22.22 28.57	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	1 1.43 11.11 100.00	6 8.57 66.67 10.91	9 12.86
Librarians	4 5.71 10.53 100.00	5 7.14 13.16 71.43	2 2.86 5.26 66.67	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	27 38.57 71.05 49.09	38 54.29
TOTAL	4 5.71	7 10.00	3 4.29	1 1.43	55 78.57	70 100.00

Chi-square = 15.930

Degree of freedom = 8

Sample size = 70

Probability = .043

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is noted that there are three methods of selection responsibility currently in practice. The first one is where primary responsibility is under the authority of faculty members. The second one is where responsibility is vested in the librarians. Thirdly, it is where there is a joint venture between the faculty members and the librarians.

According to the literature examined, the librarians have dominated the responsibility of selecting library materials since the 1950s until today. It is clear from the study that the literature related to selection suggests that if selection is left solely to the faculty members, it tends to lead to unbalanced, uncoordinated collection, which frequently reflects the personal research interests of staff. In such cases there is no way in which pitfalls can be avoided. This has been experienced by many libraries both in and outside the country (United States), where the faculty members were responsible for selecting library materials. This resulted in many problems being created without remedy. The idea of giving librarians more responsibility seems to be gaining support.

Although this is a worldwide problem, the United States seems to be the country most often mentioned in the articles examined, but other countries are following the same pattern. This is not a problem limited to one country. In order to avoid such problems and achieve the primary purpose of the library collection (which is to meet the classroom objectives of the students and the faculty), the onus of selection responsibility should be rest with the librarians. Librarians as

the ones who are finally accountable for subsequent inadequacies, and have control over the library budget, should have the primary role and the authority in developing the library collection. The issue of whether the library is centralized or decentralized does not seem engross many authors. The fact is, whether centralized or decentralized, librarians are accredited the primary responsibility.

It is also noted from the literature analyzed in the study that selection in academic libraries will not be effective if the library does not have competent and sufficient staff to aid in the selection and processing of new collections in time. The staff should be properly equipped with the knowledge of books and subjects for them to help in the collection selection in an effective way. The introduction of subject specialists or subject librarians in academic libraries will make this an accomplishment, and enhance a well balanced collection. Therefore, the study proves that it is time to move from that old and honored position where librarians were regarded as incompetent in selecting library materials. Librarians should be proactive in their responsibilities, and prove their points against the faculty members. It is hoped that this study will add quality in developing effective and balanced collection at the University of the North Library. It will also give the librarians the opportunity to make their points. By doing this, users will be satisfied with the services being offered in libraries.

APPENDIX A

Content Analysis Coding Categories

1. ID number of Articles:	IDNUMBER
2. Primary Responsibility:	PRIMRES
F=	Faculty Members
L=	Librarians
B=	Both
3. Types of Libraries:	LIBTYPE
A =	Academic
P =	Public
4. Types of Academic Libraries:	ACATYPE
UN =	University
SM =	Small Liberal Arts College
CC =	Community College
AL =	All Types Combined
5. Organization of Libraries:	LIBORG
C =	Centralized
D =	Decentralized
N=	Not Designated
6. Country:	COUNTRY
AF =	Africa
EU =	Europe
SA =	South America
US =	United States
OT =	Others
7. Publication Date:	PUBDATE
1=	1950-1969
2=	1970-1979
3=	1980-1989
4=	1990-1998

APPENDIX B

Content Analysis Coding Sheet

Sample

IDNUMBER	PRIMRES	LIBTYPE	ACATYPE	LIBORG	COUNTRY	PUBDATE

APPENDIX C

Content Analysis data

IDNUMBER	PRIMPRES	LIBTYPE	ACATYPE	LIBORG	COUNTRY	PUBDATE
1	F	A	SM	C	SA	4
2	L	A	UN	N	US	1
3	L	A	CC	D	US	3
4	L	A	AL	N	US	3
5	L	A	UN	N	EU	3
6	L	A	UN	D	US	4
7	L	A	UN	N	US	3
8	B	A	SM	C	US	4
9	F	A	UN	N	US	3
10	L	A	UN	N	US	2
11	L	A	SM	N	US	4
12	L	P		N	US	3
13	B	A	CC	N	US	4
14	L	A	UN	D	US	3
15	L	A	UN	N	US	4
16	B	A	UN	D	OT	1
17	L	A	UN	N	US	4
18	B	A	UN	N	US	4
19	L	A	UN	N	EU	4
20	B	A	AL	N	US	3
21	B	A	AL	N	US	2
22	L	A	AL	N	EU	3
23	B	A	AL	C	US	3
24	L	A	AL	N	US	3
25	B	A	SM	C	US	2
26	L	A	AL	N	US	4
27	L	A	SM	D	US	4
28	F	A	AL	N	US	3
29	B	A	SM	N	US	1
30	F	A	CC	N	US	3
31	L	A	UN	N	US	4
32	L	A	UN	N	AF	4
33	L	A	SM	N	AF	3
34	B	A	UN	D	US	3
35	F	A	UN	N	EU	4
36	B	A	UN	C	US	4
37	B	A	AL	N	US	3
38	L	A	AL	N	US	3
39	B	A	UN	D	US	1

IDNUMBER	PRIMPRES	LIBTYPE	ACATYPE	LIBORG	COUNTRY	PUBDATE
40	L	P		N	US	4
41	F	A	CC	C	US	3
42	L	A	UN	N	OT	1
43	L	A	CC	N	US	2
44	B	A	CC	C	US	3
45	L	P		N	OT	3
46	L	A	AL	N	US	1
47	L	A	CC	N	US	2
48	B	A	CC	N	US	1
49	L	A	UN	N	AF	2
50	B	A	UN	N	US	3
51	L	A	UN	N	EU	3
52	L	A	AL	N	US	3
53	B	A	AL	N	US	1
54	L	A	UN	N	US	1
55	B	A	UN	D	US	3
56	B	A	UN	D	US	1
57	L	A	UN	D	US	1
58	B	A	UN	D	US	1
59	B	A	UN	N	US	2
60	B	A	UN	N	US	1
61	B	A	AL	N	US	2
62	F	A	UN	N	US	1
63	L	A	UN	D	US	1
64	L	A	UN	D	US	4
65	F	A	UN	C	US	2
66	L	A	UN	N	EU	4
67	L	P		N	US	4
68	F	A	UN	D	EU	4
69	L	P			US	3
70	L	P		C	AF	4

APPENDIX D

Articles Analyzed

Arnold, Amy E. 1993. Approval slips and faculty participation in book selection at a small university library. Collection Management 18, nos. 1-2: 89-102.

Aston, Jennefer. 1996. The selection dilemma. The Law Librarian 27, no. 4: 238-241.

Bach, Harry.1957. Acquisition policy in the American academic library. College and Research Libraries 18 (November): 441-451.

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Bordeianu, Sever, and Christina E. Carter. 1996. Tenets of reference selection for academic libraries. Collection Management 20, nos. 3-4: 39-50.

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Clarke, Jack A., and Richard M. Cooklock. 1966. Book selection- from teachers college to university. College and Research Libraries 27 (May): 222-224.

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